American Dramatists Series

The Man You Love

Robert A. Kasper

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American Dramatists Series

THE MAN YOU LOVE

A Play in Four Acts

ROBERT A. KASPER

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To My Father and Mother
Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Kasper
With all love and affection
I dedicate this play

CAST:

FRANK GILMORE, *General Manager Western Railroad.*
MRS. GILMORE, *his wife.*
FLORENCE, MARIE, } *their daughters.*
JANE, *their maid.*
EDWARD MONROE, *President Western Railroad.*
JOHN SIMMS, *General Superintendent Western Railroad.*
MICHAEL MURPHY, *Superintendent of Machinery Western Railroad.*
ELBERT WORTHING, *State's Attorney.*
WILLIAM WORTHING, *his son.*
JORDAN CARROLL.
RICHARD HERNE.
ARTHUR STONE.

ACT I.

Library in the Gilmore home. 5 p. m.

ACT II.

Same. One week later. Evening.

ACT III.

Same. A few minutes later.

ACT IV.

Same. A few days later. Evening.

TIME—*The present.* PLACE—*Any large city.*

SETTING:

A very elaborate library scene. Drapery-hung doors center and right. Library table center. Telephone on table and chairs right and left of table. Stool before library chair right of center. Bookcase along back wall, right. Small table back left and phonograph on table. Fireplace set in left wall. Davenport near fireplace. Other accessories about the room.

THE MAN YOU LOVE

ACT I.

Library in the Gilmore home. 5 p. m.

(The curtain rises upon an empty stage. A slight pause when the telephone bell rings. Jane enters right, crosses to table center and takes receiver off hook.)

JANE.

(At 'phone.)

Hello.—The editor of The Tribune?—Mr. Gilmore is not in.—Yes, Mrs. Gilmore is here.—Just a moment, please.

(Puts down receiver and exits right. A slight pause.)

MRS. GILMORE.

(Enters right, crosses to table center and takes up receiver. Mrs. Gilmore is forty years of age.)

(At 'phone.)

Yes.—Mr. Gilmore is not here.—He didn't re-

sign. *(Thoughtfully)* That is, *(Lightly)* well, I'm sure because he hasn't said a word to me.—You may reach him here in about an hour.

(Puts up receiver. Mr. Gilmore enters door center. He is forty-five years of age and appears worried.)

(To husband.)

You're early, dear.

('Phone bell rings.)

(Mrs. Gilmore expects husband to answer 'phone.)

GILMORE.

If that's a paper say I'm not here.

MRS. GILMORE.

Deary, I don't understand.

GILMORE.

Please, dear.

('Phone bell rings again.)

MRS. GILMORE.

But I don't want to tell a falsehood.

GILMORE.

(Impatiently.)

Don't be silly. I'm not here for the paper.

MRS. GILMORE.

(Hesitates, then crosses to 'phone as 'phone bell rings again.)

(At 'phone.)

Hello.—The Examiner?—Mr. Gilmore is not in.

(Hangs up receiver.)

(To husband.)

That is the second call about your resignation. What does it mean?

GILMORE.

(Hesitatingly.)

It means I—I did resign.

MRS. GILMORE.

(Sadly.)

Frank, without consulting me?

GILMORE.

I made up my mind rather suddenly. That is—.

MRS. GILMORE.

Why do you hesitate?

GILMORE.

Well,—I didn't exactly give up my position. I lost it.

MRS. GILMORE.

You lost it! Why?

GILMORE.

I supported a political enemy of the Western at the last election. Burnham, who had given an adverse decision to the road. You remember.

MRS. GILMORE.

Yes.—Oh, it's unjust after you have worked so hard all these years.

(Crosses close to him.)

I'll share this disappointment with you, as we have shared disappointments in the past.

GILMORE.

I don't know what I'd do without you. You're everything to me.

MRS. GILMORE.

(With sigh.)

I suppose the papers will make a big story of it and intimate all sorts of things.

GILMORE.

Perhaps. But don't you mind, dear.

MRS. GILMORE.

I do. We must consider our children. We must leave them their heritage, a good name, so that when we are gone, they will not regret they were given in our care.

GILMORE.

You make me feel as though I had done something wrong.

MRS. GILMORE.

You couldn't, dear. You're too strong a character, and I love you, oh so much!

(She puts her arms about him and kisses him. Gilmore is thoughtful.)

(Marie, their eight-year-old daughter, enters center. She has her school books in hand. Gilmore brightens at sight of child.)

MARIE.

Hello, daddy.

(Rushes to her father.)

GILMORE.

Hello, dear.

(Marie throws herself in her father's arms. He raises her off her feet and kisses her; then puts her down.)

MARIE.

That was a stingy one, daddy. I'll bet you and mamsy have used up all your kisses.

(Father and mother smile.)

(Gilmore kisses child as before, raising her off her feet, then putting her down.)

(Marie rushes to her mother.)

Hello, mamsy.

MRS. GILMORE.

You're a naughty girl, not coming right home from school.

(Kisses child.)

MARIE.

Walter Mason and I were watching the circus parade, and oh it was grand!

MRS. GILMORE.

You shouldn't worry mother.

MARIE.

I won't mamsy.—And, daddy, we're going to see the circus.

(Crosses to father.)

GILMORE.

We won't go to-night, dear.

MARIE.

You promised, daddy.

(Mrs. Gilmore indicates by action husband should go with Marie.)

GILMORE.

All right, dear.

MARIE.

I'm so glad, daddy.

GILMORE.

(Seats himself left of table. Marie sits on her father's lap and kisses him. Gilmore looks lovingly at child. Mrs. Gilmore seats herself right of table.)

What did my little girl learn to-day at school?

MARIE.

I didn't learn so much, daddy, 'cause teacher was awful cross and didn't teach at all; just let us draw pictures and read stories.

MRS. GILMORE.

Were the boys tormenting her, dear?

MARIE.

Oh, no, mamsy. She was cross and cranky when she came. Willie Smith said some feller throwed her down, and when I asked him why teacher didn't go to the hospital like auntie did when she fell, he just laughed and told some of the other boys, and they laughed too.

(Father and mother smile.)

('Phone bell rings. Gilmore indicates to his wife she should answer 'phone.)

(Mrs. Gilmore reaches for 'phone.)

GILMORE.

(To wife.)

Remember, dear. I'll speak to no papers.

MARIE.

Why, daddy?

MRS. GILMORE.

(Indicates to Marie she should keep quiet. Marie puts her hand over her mouth.)

('Phone bell rings.)

(To husband.)

Don't you think you'd better answer and explain?

GILMORE.

Please answer.

(Marie looks puzzled.)

MRS. GILMORE.

(Takes up receiver.)

(At 'phone.)

Hello.—The editor of The Sun?—Mr. Gilmore is not here.

(Hangs up receiver.)

MARIE.

Why, mamsy? He is so!

MRS. GILMORE.

Papa isn't here for the newspapers, dear.

MARIE.

But you didn't say that, mamsy.

GILMORE.

That's what mother meant, dear.

(Marie looks puzzled.)

(Gilmore raises Marie off his lap.)

(To Marie.)

Come. We'll get ready for dinner.

(Takes her hand.)

(Marie still looks puzzled. She crosses with father to exit right. As they cross, Marie speaks.)

MARIE.

Mamsy didn't fib, daddy?

GILMORE.

Of course not, dear.

MARIE.

I'm glad she didn't, 'cause I know she'd scold me if I did, and I don't want to have to scold her.

(Gilmore and Marie exit right.)

(Florence Gilmore and William Worthing enter center. Florence is twenty years of age; William is twenty-three.)

MRS. GILMORE.

Hello, children. How did you like the show?

FLORENCE.

Dandy, mother. Lewis Waller was just fine.

WILLIAM.

And his leading woman, a peach. She's got me all right.

(Florence assumes offended attitude and crosses right. Neither mother nor William, who stand center, notice her.)

(To Mrs. Gilmore.)

Guess who sat in a box.

MRS. GILMORE.

Who?

WILLIAM.

Mrs. Farnum.

MRS. GILMORE.

You don't say. How did she look?

WILLIAM.

Scrumptious. Her divorce seems to have agreed with her.

MRS. GILMORE.

Shame on you talking that way, Will.

WILLIAM.

That's what I thought. No use being a hypocrite, is there, Flo?

(William turns to Florence and notices her offended attitude. Florence does not answer William's question. She stands sulking.)

(To Florence.)

Well, what happened you?

FLORENCE.

(Drawl.)

Oh, nothing.

WILLIAM.

Then answer my question.

(Florence looks down and is sulky.)

MRS. GILMORE.

Don't quarrel, children.—I guess I'd better leave you two alone.—You'll stay to dinner, Will?

WILLIAM.

Thank you. Some other time. I have an engagement with father.

MRS. GILMORE.

Remember me to your father, and remind him he hasn't been to see Mr. Gilmore and myself for a long time. I don't believe he ever let a week pass without calling since Mr. Gilmore and I were married, except immediately after your mother died.

WILLIAM.

Father has been very busy of late. I'll tell him what you said.

MRS. GILMORE.

Don't forget. Good-bye, Will.

(Crosses to exit right.)

WILLIAM.

Good-bye, Mrs. Gilmore.

MRS. GILMORE.

(At exit right; turns.)

Oh, Florence. If any newspapers call, father is not here.

FLORENCE.

Yes, mother.

(Mrs. Gilmore exits right. Immediately she has made her exit, Florence looks off stage right to make sure her mother has gone, then crosses to William and confronts him.)

So the leading woman has you going?

(William looks upon Florence seriously for a moment, then of a sudden laughs heartily.)

That's right, laugh. You may think it's funny, but I don't see the joke.

WILLIAM.

(Laughs.)

They say woman lacks a sense of humor. Perhaps yours needs fixing.

(Laughs.)

FLORENCE.

It's my head needs fixing, falling in love with a base deceiver like you. You *are* a base deceiver. Just like the rest of the men. You make a woman think you're head over heels in love with her, and then when you have her in your grasp, you pull the string and ———.

WILLIAM.

(Interrupts.)

Bunty does the rest.

FLORENCE.

Oh, you—you're all alike.

WILLIAM.

(Laughs.)

So that's why you were sulky.

(Laughs.)

I'll have to tell your mother.

(Crosses to exit right as though to carry out his threat, but Florence intercepts him.)

FLORENCE.

If you do, I'll never speak to you again.

WILLIAM.

And if I don't?

FLORENCE.

(Pause.)

(Regards William.)

Honest, now, did you mean what you said?

(William looks at Florence and smiles. They are standing together right of center.)

Tell me, Billy, did you?

WILLIAM.

(Tantalizingly.)

I'm not a base deceiver?

FLORENCE.

(Pause.)

Well, no, not if ———.

(She does not finish and looks down.)

WILLIAM.

(Smiles contentedly.)

Of course, I didn't mean it, Flo, and you're a silly girl to think I did.

(Marie enters right. She stands before entrance watching the two lovers. William takes Florence in his arms and kisses her. Marie watches the proceedings, then holds her hand over her mouth to suppress a laugh, which is heard despite her effort to prevent it. Marie retreats hurriedly right when the lovers turn and discover her.)

(William and Florence look after Marie as she exits right laughing. Both cross left and are rather startled.)

FLORENCE.

Now everyone will know we're in love.

WILLIAM.

Do you really think anyone would ever suspect it?

(Laughs.)

FLORENCE.

(Becomes angry.)

You're laughing at me.

WILLIAM.

I'm not.

FLORENCE.

It's that—that actress woman.

(Starts to cry and crosses to davenport left. She sits on davenport and holds her handkerchief to her eyes.)

('Phone bell rings.)

WILLIAM.

(Has started to cross to Florence, but stops, turns and looks at 'phone. He turns, looks at Florence, then at 'phone, which is still ringing. Looks back at Florence.)

For goodness sakes don't cry until I answer this 'phone.

('Phone continues to ring during intervals until William answers it. Florence continues to cry. William looks from 'phone to Florence, then speaks to her feelingly.)

Please don't cry, Florence.

(Florence continues to cry. William looks at her, then speaks rather helplessly.)

Go ahead and cry.

FLORENCE.

(Stops crying abruptly and looks up.)

I won't.

WILLIAM.

You see, as soon as I ———.

(He does not finish, but looks helplessly at 'phone, which is still ringing. Crosses to 'phone and takes receiver off hook.)

(At 'phone.)

Hello.—The editor of The Herald?

(Florence takes her handkerchief from her eyes and is all attention.)

FLORENCE.

He wants to speak to me.

WILLIAM.

(At 'phone. Gazes directly at Florence when he reads next line.)

Mr. Gilmore is not in.

(Florence turns away angrily.)

(At 'phone.)

Just a moment.

(To Florence.)

When will your father be home?

FLORENCE.

(Rises, rushes to 'phone and literally jerks the receiver out of William's hand. She glares at William as she speaks.)

(To William.)

I'll speak to the editor myself.

(At 'phone.)

(Gushingly.)

This is Florence Gilmore, Mr. Editor. I'm angry with you.—Because you didn't print that society notice. Not a paper in town printed it.—If it was an oversight, I'll mail it again for next week.—You're filled up?—Then the week after next.—Father ought to be home soon. Don't forget to print that notice week after next.—Well, yes, it would be rather late. You'll print the next one?—All right. Good-bye, Mr. Editor.

(Hangs up receiver and is in a happy frame of mind until she sees William. She crosses to davenport and sits down pouting.)

WILLIAM.

(Crosses to her.)

Forgive me, Flo, if I've hurt you. I do love you, dear. Why, I have you for breakfast, dinner and supper, and when I go to bed at night, I dream of you and our future, and I picture our happiness in our own little home so complete and wonderful, that sometimes I think it can never come true.

FLORENCE.

(Rises.)

(Protestingly.)

But it will come true.

WILLIAM.

(Puts his hands on Florence's shoulders.)

I hope so, dear. We'll always be good old pals and sweethearts, and when we grow old, and our hair turns gray and our faces are wrinkled, our hearts will still be as young and gay and as full of love for each other, as my father's and mother's was in the past, and your mother's and father's is now.

FLORENCE.

(Thoroughly contented.)

You're wonderful, Will.

(Kisses him and slyly runs from him.)

WILLIAM.

Tell me what I am again.

(Florence smiles.)

GILMORE.

(Enters right.)

Hello, Will.

WILLIAM.

Good evening, Mr. Gilmore.

FLORENCE.

(Crosses to father and kisses him.)

I didn't know you were home.

(Notices father's serious expression.)

Why, father! What's the matter?

GILMORE.

Overworked. Bunch of nerves.

FLORENCE.

You do work hard. Too hard. You ought to take a vacation.

GILMORE.

Think I will. Made my preliminary plans.

FLORENCE.

(Pleased.)

You did?

GILMORE.

I've given up my position.

(Regards William.)

FLORENCE.

I'm glad. You've been so worried and worn out of late, you haven't been yourself at all. But now you'll be the same cheerful, happy dad, you always were.

GILMORE.

I hope so, Florence.

JANE.

(Enters center.)

Mr. Murphy to see Mr. Gilmore.

GILMORE.

Show him in.

(Jane exits center.)

FLORENCE.

(Looks slyly and with pleasure at William, then speaks to father.)

You'll excuse us, won't you, father?

GILMORE.

Of course, dear.

(William and Florence exit right. They are happy to be left alone.)

JANE.

(Enters center with Murphy.)

Mr. Murphy.

(Jane exits.)

MURPHY.

(Regards Gilmore. Notices his serious expression.)

You're not worrying about your job, are you, Mr. Gilmore?

GILMORE.

I'm thinking of my family.

MURPHY.

Did you tell them they fired you?

GILMORE.

I told my wife. Did you tell yours?

MURPHY.

To be sure not. Faith, do you think I want to be under the sod with her spending my hard earned money for criminal lawyers to prove her insane?

GILMORE.

You told your wife you resigned?

MURPHY.

Yes.

GILMORE.

Give any reason?

MURPHY.

I said the black hands was after me because I was becoming one of them *financiers*. And you know what she said?

(Laughs.)

She said she didn't care the black of her nails why I quit, but I'd have to support myself.

GILMORE.

You should have told your wife you were ousted, and explained why.

MURPHY.

Then you think the Western is on to us?

GILMORE.

What do you mean?

MURPHY.

The Newell deal, to be sure.

GILMORE.

The Newell deal?

MURPHY.

I see. You're playing the innocent game.

GILMORE.

Get down to facts, Murphy.

MURPHY.

I will. The Western is suspicious.

GILMORE.

Of what?

MURPHY.

They're wondering why we gave the Newell Repair Company all of the Western's repair business and I wouldn't lay any odds they haven't got some information along that line.

GILMORE.

We transferred the Western's repair business to the Newell Company because their rates were lower than any of the other repair concerns.

MURPHY.

That's our excuse and I think it will work unless they get us dead to rights.

GILMORE.

You mean we've done something dishonest?

MURPHY.

(Meaningly.)

Of course not.—Say, didn't President Blake of The Newell give you a check for fifty thousand dollars?—No use bluffing. We're all in the same boat.

GILMORE.

You mean you and Simms have been receiving money from the Newell people?

MURPHY.

To be sure.

GILMORE.

In return for The Western's repair business?

MURPHY.

As a little token of appreciation.

GILMORE.

If you and Simms have been grafting, that's your business; but we're not in the same boat. That check Blake gave me was absolutely legitimate.

MURPHY.

It was?

(Smiles.)

GILMORE.

We went in together on stock he got a tip on. Blake handled the deal and when he cashed, he gave me his check for my share.

MURPHY.

That wouldn't sound very good in a court of law.

GILMORE.

I don't care to hear any more of your insinuations. The Western has been trying to oust me for some time because I wouldn't make a joke of justice by voting for the judges who would legislate honest people's money into its pocket.

MURPHY.

Whether you admit or not, that check you got from Blake was your share of the graft.

GILMORE.

(Crosses near Murphy threateningly.)

That's a lie, Murphy.

(A pause during which they regard each other.)

MURPHY.

Do you honestly believe Blake made that money in stocks?

GILMORE.

Certainly.

MURPHY.

(Pause. Bus of reflection.)

Then you were taken in.

GILMORE.

You mean ———.

MURPHY.

Blake thought you was too shrewd to take the money outright, so pretended a legitimate deal to give you a good excuse.—But he thought you understood what the money was for.

(Gilmore. Bus of reflection.)

(A slight pause, during which Murphy regards Gilmore.)

I believe you've been on the square; but it would be pretty hard to explain that check.

GILMORE.

Blake will explain it.

MURPHY.

I'm thinking he couldn't do that.—I hear the State's Attorney's on the case.

GILMORE.

The State's Attorney!

JANE.

(Enters center and announces.)

Mr. Simms.

GILMORE.

Show him in.

(Jane exits center.)

Does Simms know you've been getting money from The Newell?

MURPHY.

Yes.

GILMORE.

He hasn't much nerve, Murphy.

MURPHY.

Faith, you're not giving me any news.

JANE.

(Enters center with Simms.)

Mr. Simms.

(Jane exits center.)

MURPHY.

Hello, Simms.

SIMMS.

(He is an out-and-out coward. He enters shrinking and greatly worried. His age is thirty-seven.)

Looks pretty bad, don't it?

GILMORE.

(To Simms.)

Sit down.

(Indicates chair left of table.)

(Simms sits where indicated.)

Sit down Murphy.

(Indicates chair right of table.)

(Murphy seats himself.)

(Gilmore stands back of table. He is very thoughtful and remains silent.)

MURPHY.

(To Simms.)

We're in a mighty tight place, Simms.

SIMMS.

I always opposed this repair shop scheme.

MURPHY.

It wasn't the scheme you opposed. You always reminded me of a safecracker who expected to get rich on the risk of a shoplifter.

SIMMS.

Suppose they find us out and bring us to trial? They can't convict us, can they?

MURPHY.

I'm not one of these *clarevoyagers.*

SIMMS.

(Turns, looks at Gilmore.)

(To Gilmore.)

You think they're on to us, Gilmore?

(Gilmore. Business of expression.)

MURPHY.

Gilmore hasn't anything to do with the Newell affair, Simms.

SIMMS.

He got more out of it than we did.

MURPHY.

Be careful what you're saying.

SIMMS.

I can prove it.

GILMORE.

Prove it.

SIMMS.

Ford, the former cashier at the Newell Company, secured photographs of the checks we all received.

(Takes three photographs from pocket.)

He sold me those photographs.

(Picks out one. Speaks to Gilmore.)

This is a copy of the fifty thousand dollar check Blake gave you.

(Gilmore is startled.)

MURPHY.

(Crosses hurriedly to Simms and snatches photograph from Simms' hand. Gilmore crosses excitedly and looks at photograph with Murphy and indicates by reflection it is real. Murphy hurriedly destroys the photograph as he speaks.)

Gilmore's deal was absolutely legitimate, Simms, and don't you say it wasn't.

SIMMS.

You're going to blame it all on me, so's you'll get free.

(Gilmore. Bus of reflection.)

MURPHY.

We're trying to make a man of you, but you're making it a tough job.

GILMORE.

(Quietly.)

Murphy told you the truth. My check was for a stock investment. Be a man. Show some fight.

SIMMS.

(Backs to exit, center.)

It's easy for you to talk. Why don't you say I'm innocent. Why don't Murphy believe my check was for stock. You can't fool me. You can't trick me like that. I always opposed this scheme. They'll consider that. Damn little I got out of it. They'll consider that, too. We'll see who's who when the time comes. If they get me, they'll get you, too, Gilmore, and you, Murphy. Just wait and see.

(Simms exits center.)

MURPHY.

If he was my brother, I think I'd kiss him.

GILMORE.

(Smiles faintly, then becomes serious and speaks to Murphy.)

I can't tell you how much I appreciate what you've just done for me.

MURPHY.

I haven't forgotten you gave me my start at The Western and helped me along to a decent job.

GILMORE.

(Thoughtful.)

You're sure Blake thinks I accepted that check as my share of the graft?

MURPHY.

Faith, didn't he tell me that?

GILMORE.

Then as far as he's concerned, I'm guilty.

(Looks off stage right. Thinks.)

You catch up with Simms and humor him along. I'm going to find out if the State's Attorney is investigating the Newell.

MURPHY.

How are you going to do it?

GILMORE.

I'll tell you all about it later.

MURPHY.

I hope you get some information.

(Exits center. Gilmore is very thoughtful. He starts to cross to exit right when Florence and William enter right.)

FLORENCE.

Cheer up, father. You look awfully gloomy.

WILLIAM.

(Lightly.)

Women must criticise, Mr. Gilmore.

FLORENCE.

Because men are so imperfect.

(William: Bus of expression.)

GILMORE.

(To Florence.)

Do you mind if I have a short talk with Will?

FLORENCE.

Why, no.

(Regards father and William, then exits right.)

GILMORE.

Sit down, Will.

(Indicates chair left of table, where William seats himself. Gilmore sits right of table.)

I want to compliment you on that case you tried

in court last week. You certainly put one over on old Coogan. Bet Florence was mighty proud of you.

WILLIAM.

She seemed to be pleased.

GILMORE.

How are you and she making out?

WILLIAM.

We get along all right.

GILMORE.

Have some good times, eh, Will?

WILLIAM.

Yes, we do.

GILMORE.

How do you stand with her?

WILLIAM.

She doesn't say very much.

GILMORE.

She always was a quiet girl.

WILLIAM.

Is that so?

GILMORE.

(Smilingly.)

When she was an infant, we couldn't get a word out of her.

WILLIAM.

(Looks peculiarly at Gilmore, then smiles.)

Oh, I know what you think.

GILMORE.

I'm not thinking, Will. I know you and Florence are secretly engaged to be married. You're a fox, Will, but you're trapped this time.

(William smiles in an embarrassed manner.)

Just stumbled onto the information.

(Cautiously.)

Accidentally overheard you say you expected to be in a position to marry her soon.

(Regards him intently.)

You weren't raising false hopes, just to keep Florence in good humor?

WILLIAM.

Of course not.

GILMORE.

I suppose you are basing your hope of quick success on the work you're doing for your father.

WILLIAM.

I haven't anything to do with father's case.—But regarding Florence, I haven't asked your consent or Mrs. Gilmore's. You sprang the subject rather suddenly.

GILMORE.

It's all right with me and I'm sure Mrs. Gilmore won't object.

WILLIAM.

(Pleased and relieved.)

That's quite a relief.

GILMORE.

I hope your father will approve. He hasn't been here for a while, but, then, I realize he's very busy.

Must be lining up a corking case. Been working on it a long time, hasn't he?

WILLIAM.

Over three months, I guess.

(Gilmore shows pleasure at progress he is making.)

GILMORE.

How's he making out?

WILLIAM.

You can't prove it by me.

GILMORE.

You'd think he'd let you know all about his work to familiarize you with his methods.

WILLIAM.

He has always confided in me; but I couldn't get a thing out of him this time.

GILMORE.

You don't mean to say he hasn't told you anything about his present case.

WILLIAM.

Not a word; but I rubbered around a bit.

GILMORE.

Can't fool you, Will. Bet you found out what your father is investigating.

WILLIAM.

That's about all.

GILMORE.

(As though reflecting. Thoughtful.)

Your father has always told you about his cases, but not a word this time.

(Thinks. Decision.)

Are you sure you know what his case is about?

WILLIAM.

Certainly.

GILMORE.

Think now. Are you sure?

WILLIAM.

(Thinks.)

Of course. Why do you ask?

GILMORE.

You've conveyed to my mind your father is investigating the Newell Repair Company.

WILLIAM.

That's right; but I didn't tell you.

GILMORE.

It's just mental telepathy.

WILLIAM.

That's wonderful.

(Pause.)

(Consults watch. Rises excitedly.)

I'll have to be going.—Say good-bye to Florence for me, will you?

GILMORE.

Yes.

WILLIAM.

And tell her you're in on the secret.

GILMORE.

I'll do that, Will.

(William exits center.)

(Thoughtful. Decision.)

(Crosses to 'phone and takes up receiver.)

(At 'phone.)

Hello. — Central 501. — Hello. — Mr. Blake, please.—Hello.—Blake?—This is Gilmore talking. Worthing is investigating the Newell.—From his son. What stock did we invest in?—I never understood anything but a legitimate deal.—I don't care what you say, you'll have to tell the truth about that check.

(Puts up receiver angrily.)

(Gilmore sits looking thoughtfully front. Marie enters, crosses behind father and puts her hands over his eyes. Gilmore reaches back and takes her hands, and cheers up somewhat when he realizes it is Marie. Marie releases her hands and puts her arms about her father's neck, pressing her face against his.)

MARIE.

My, but we'll have a good time at the circus tonight, won't we, daddy?

GILMORE.

(Seriously.)

Yes, dear. We'll have a good time.

(Marie looks lovingly upon her father and Gilmore looks thoughtfully front.)

AS
THE
CURTAIN
FALLS.

ACT II.

Library in the Gilmore home. Evening.

One week later.

(At the rise of curtain, Jane enters center. She has the evening paper in hand and reads with evident interest and some surprise, an article on the first page. She continues to read as she crosses to table center, glancing up from the paper rather slyly once or twice, to make sure she is all alone. Just as she has reached table center, the door bell rings. Jane is somewhat startled and drops the paper on the table. Then she sighs in relief when she realizes the cause of her shock. She thought she was discovered. She indicates by a shake of the head and a movement of the hands that the item she has read is shocking. Jane then crosses to center entrance, makes her exit and in a moment re-enters with William Worthing.)

JANE.

(To William.)

I'll call Miss Gilmore.

(Jane exits right.)

(William crosses to table center, notices the paper Jane has left there, picks it up and glances over the

first page, scanning the item Jane has read and showing annoyance. He merely scans the article, indicating he has already read it. William tosses the paper back upon the table.)

FLORENCE.

(Enters right.)

Hello, Will. I thought you'd be busy at the office.

WILLIAM.

Aren't you glad to see me?

FLORENCE.

(Crosses to him.)

Why, of course.

(She puts her arms about him, regards him and notices his serious expression.)

Something's worrying you, Will. Isn't your case turning out all right?

WILLIAM.

I came to have a rather serious talk with you, Florence.

FLORENCE.

You frighten me, Will.

WILLIAM.

It's about your father.

FLORENCE.

Then you needn't fear telling me anything, because the papers have exhausted the meanest reasons they possibly could find for father's supposed expulsion from the Western.

WILLIAM.

You don't realize how serious it is.

FLORENCE.

Please go on.

WILLIAM.

You will love me in spite of anything?

FLORENCE.

Tell me about father.

WILLIAM.

You'll find it there—in the evening paper.

(Indicates paper Jane left on table center.)

FLORENCE.

(Crosses excitedly to table center, takes up paper and reads article hurriedly. William stands left and looks away.)

(Excitedly.)

Father accused of stealing the Western's money! And Will, your father has conducted the investigation and will bring the charges?

(Drops paper on table and crosses to William, who still looks away.)

Oh, it isn't true, Will?

WILLIAM.

(Turns to Florence.)

Murphy and Simms were served this afternoon. —Your father would have been served had he been in town.

FLORENCE.

I can't believe your father will bring such a horrible charge against my father.

WILLIAM.

Father had hoped to find Mr. Gilmore innocent.

FLORENCE.

He believes my father guilty of theft?

WILLIAM.

(Shakes head to indicate Yes.)

(Pause.)

I'm sorry, but I want you to know the truth, so you and I will understand.

FLORENCE.

I understand. Your father sent you to break our engagement. I don't blame you, Will. Here's your ring.

(Takes engagement ring from finger.)

WILLIAM.

(Rushes to her and holds her hands closed over ring she offers.)

No, Florence!—I love you in spite of anything your father may have done.

FLORENCE.

It's noble of you to say that, Will. If my love for you were merely selfish, I would permit our re-

lationship to continue. I want to release you because if my father—if my family's name were disgraced, the sacrifice you would make in taking me, would be greater than my love for you could bear.

WILLIAM.

Do you realize what it will mean to me to put you out of my life?

FLORENCE.

And do you realize what it means to me to return this ring. Why it means the shattering of my little dream.

(Turns away broken, then after a struggle forces ring in William's hand.)

WILLIAM.

No, Florence!—No!

FLORENCE.

You're making it hard for me, Will.

(Notes William's sorrowful expression.)

A girl should put a man on a higher plane. At least she should not drag him down, and that's what I'd be doing, Will, if father———. Oh, please, please understand.

WILLIAM.

I love you, dear, and you must permit me to hold your love.

FLORENCE.

You'll always hold my love, Will. Always. But you must consider your father. I'm sure he would not permit you to marry the daughter of the man he thinks a thief.

WILLIAM.

Don't say that, Florence!

FLORENCE.

He told you so before you came. Don't you see it's impossible for us to continue?

WILLIAM.

Suppose I convince father you and I should not suffer?

FLORENCE.

Do you think my father would allow me to marry the son of the man who accuses him of wrong?

WILLIAM.

Are we to be separated forever just because some-

thing over which neither you nor I had control happened in the lives of others?

FLORENCE.

Oh, I've tried to make you see it my way. In trying to change my ideas, you're only torturing me. Leave me, please, leave me.

(She sinks in chair left of table, buries her face in her hands and begins to cry. William regards her a moment undecided what to do. He indicates by action he is about to speak, thinks a moment, slowly crosses to exit, center, turns, again regards Florence, makes another effort as though to speak, then slowly and sorrowfully exits center.)

(A slight pause.)

(Mrs. Gilmore and Marie enter right. Marie has a school book in hand.)

MARIE.

(Crosses to Florence.)

Why are you crying, sister?

(Florence looks up and dries her eyes, but does not speak.)

MRS. GILMORE.

(Has crossed to Florence.)

What's the matter, Florence?

FLORENCE.

I'm having a good cry, that's all.

(Rises and hurriedly crosses to exit right and exits crying.)

MARIE.

Sister's eyes will be all red, mamsy.

JANE.

(Enters center.)

A reporter of The Tribune wants to speak to Mr. Gilmore.

MRS. GILMORE.

Say Mr. Gilmore is not here. Remember that in future when reporters call.

JANE.

Yes, mam.

(Exits center.)

MARIE.

Daddy is gettin' to be an awful big man, isn't he, mamsy?

(Mrs. Gilmore reflects line.)

(Marie picks up paper Florence has dropped on table center.)

MRS. GILMORE.

Let mother have the paper.

MARIE.

(Reluctantly gives paper to mother.)

You haven't let me see the paper for a whole week now, mamsy, not even the funny pictures.

MRS. GILMORE.

You may see the funny pictures, dear.

MARIE.

I mean the funny pictures on the first page.

(Mrs. Gilmore reflects line.)

(Pause.)

It's awful lonesome without daddy.

MRS. GILMORE.

Don't you like to be with mother, dear?

MARIE.

Oh, it's different with daddy. He's a man and you're a woman.

MRS. GILMORE.

Whatever do you mean, Marie?

MARIE.

Walter Mason says it takes a man to understand a woman. Of course I'm not a woman now, but I will be some day, won't I, mamsy?

MRS. GILMORE.

(Smiles faintly.)

Of course, dear.

MARIE.

(Crosses to stool set before large library chair right and seats herself.)

You sit here, mamsy, *(Indicates library chair right)* and read, and I'll study.

MRS. GILMORE.

All right, dear.

(Crosses and seats herself in library chair, right.)

MARIE.

I wished I didn't need to study, mamsy.

MRS. GILMORE.

(Unfolds newspaper and glances at it. She continues this business while talking to Marie.)

All girls must study, dear.

MARIE.

Why, mamsy?

MRS. GILMORE.

People respect little girls who are smart, dear.

MARIE.

Will they respect me, mamsy?

(Mrs. Gilmore has discovered the article regarding her husband. She reads excitedly.)

Will they, mamsy?

MRS. GILMORE.

(Excitedly.)

Of course, of course.

MARIE.

What's the matter, mamsy?

MRS. GILMORE.

Study your lessons, dear.

MARIE.

All right, mamsy.

(Marie studies. Mrs. Gilmore hurriedly reads article and becomes worried and excited. Marie does not look up. Mrs. Gilmore tears the article from the paper. Marie looks up from her book, regards her mother, then speaks.)

Why are you doing that, mamsy?

MRS. GILMORE.

Oh—why—a bargain in linens.

(Recovers her composure somewhat.)

I'm going to buy you the prettiest little things.

MARIE.

(Rises from her stool and puts down her book.)

Let me see the bargains, mamsy.

(She stands beside her mother, puts her arms about her neck and tries to steal a look at the article her mother has clipped, but Mrs. Gilmore holds it away so Marie cannot see it.)

MRS. GILMORE.

Mother wants to surprise Marie.

MARIE.

(Puts down her book and crosses left. She takes up a rubber ball and jacks, seats herself on floor and begins to play. Mrs. Gilmore lapses into deep thought, glancing over the clipping she holds in her hand and showing much concern.)

There was the awfullest fight at school to-day, mamsy.

MRS. GILMORE.

(Looks up at child.)

Yes.

MARIE.

(Proudly.)

'Bout me, mamsy.

MRS. GILMORE.

About you?

MARIE.

Johnny Jones said my daddy used to be General Manager of The Western all right, and his daddy is only a bricklayer; but his daddy always made an honest living.

MRS. GILMORE.

(Reflection.)

It was a terrible thing for him to say.

MARIE.

That's what Walter Mason thought, so he knocked the stuffin' out of Johnny for being so fresh.

MRS. GILMORE.

He's a horrid, horrid boy, Marie.

MARIE.

(Continues her game of jacks. There is a slight pause, Mrs. Gilmore all the while thoughtful. Marie finally rises, crosses to her mother and stands before her.)

Is daddy honest, mamsy?

MRS. GILMORE.

Why, Marie! Of course your daddy is honest.

MARIE.

Well, Johnny said if I thought daddy was honest, I ought to read the papers, and you won't let me read the papers, mamsy.

MRS. GILMORE.

Johnny should have a sound thrashing.

MARIE.

If I was a man I'd knock the stuffin' out of him myself.

MRS. GILMORE.

And you'll have nothing more to do with him, Marie?

MARIE.

Honest I won't mamsy. Cross my heart.

(She crosses her heart.)

MRS. GILMORE.

That's a good girl.

MARIE.

I must tell sister 'bout the fight.

MRS. GILMORE.

No, dear.

MARIE.

Well, I can tell daddy.

MRS. GILMORE.

Mother doesn't want Marie to say any more about it.

MARIE.

I promise, but it's kind of hard to keep, 'cause you know the fight was 'bout me.

JANE.

(Enters center.)

Mr. Murphy to see Mr. Gilmore.

MRS. GILMORE.

Show him in, Jane.

(Jane exits center.)

(To Marie.)

You'd better go, dear.

MARIE.

Can't I meet Mr. Murphy, mamsy?

MRS. GILMORE.

You may meet him, dear. But then Marie must go.

MARIE.

Yes, mamsy.

JANE.

(Enters center with Murphy.)

Mr. Murphy.

(Jane exits center.)

MRS. GILMORE.

Good evening, Mr. Murphy.

MURPHY.

Good evening, mam.

MRS. GILMORE.

This is my daughter, Marie, Mr. Murphy.

MURPHY.

How do you do, Miss?

(Takes Marie's hand.)

(Regards Marie.)

I have a girl about your size at home. But she isn't as good looking as you.

MARIE.

You're just saying that.

MURPHY.

Sure, now, I mean it. 'Pon my word I do.

MARIE.

I like you.

MURPHY.

Now, now, don't you blarney me.

MARIE.

(Crosses to mother. She acts as though afraid.)

I think he's saying something horrid, mamsy.

MRS. GILMORE.

No, dear. He means you're making fun of him.

MARIE.

Oh!—Good-night, Mr. Murphy.

(Offers hand.)

MURPHY.

(Takes her hand.)

Good-night, Marie.

(Regards her.)

Sure, I wouldn't mind having a house full like you.

MARIE.

I wouldn't like that, Mr. Murphy.

MURPHY.

Why not?

MARIE.

It isn't near so nice if there's lots of girls.

MURPHY.

You're learning early.

MARIE.

I learn a lot of things from Walter Mason.

(To mother.)

Good-night, mamsy.

(Kisses mother. Regards her and notes serious expression.)

I know you're angry 'cause I stayed.

MRS. GILMORE.

Mother isn't angry with her little girl.

MARIE.

(Notices clipping mother still holds.)

Don't you show Mr. Murphy the bargains.

(Mrs. Gilmore: Suppressed emotion.)

You won't, mamsy?

MRS. GILMORE.

(Reluctantly.)

No, dear.

MARIE.

And you'll let me know when daddy comes.

MRS. GILMORE.

Yes, dear.

MARIE.

(To Murphy.)

Are you sure your little girl isn't as nice as me?

MURPHY.

Cross my heart.

(Crosses his heart comically.)

MARIE.

You're an awful nice man.

(Exits right.)

MRS. GILMORE.

(Watches Marie until she has made her exit.)

(To Murphy.)

I expect Mr. Gilmore very soon.

(Pause.)

(Gives full vent to emotion.)

You don't know what I have suffered the past week, Mr. Murphy. I have reared my little girl with a wholesome respect for the truth. I have impressed her with the fact that if she lied, even in little things, God would surely punish her. But I, who have taught her that principle, have had to lie to her for a whole week now, so she would not know the terrible insinuations the papers have been printing about her father.

MURPHY.

Faith, that's all they are, insinuations, mam.

MRS. GILMORE.

Up to to-night, yes; but now the papers openly and directly accuse my husband of theft, and declare the State's Attorney, our friend, will bring the charges. Oh, it's horrible!

MURPHY.

This freedom of the press sure is hell.

MRS. GILMORE.

I wonder has your wife suffered as I have suffered. I wonder has Mr. Simms' wife and family endured what I have endured.

MURPHY.

Faith, now, I can't be answerin' for Simms; but my wife is too smart a business woman to mind what the papers are saying. You know what the butcher says about her.

(Laughs.)

He says of all the people he ever had any dealings with, my wife's the only one that can count a nickel twice, and make him believe he was paid ten cents.

MRS. GILMORE.

You mean your wife doesn't worry over the terrible things the papers have been saying about you? That she won't worry and fret over this?

(Indicates clipping she holds.)

MURPHY.

This morning she says to me: "Mike, go to them newspaper fellers and tell 'em you're a regular devil let loose from the real place. Get all the advertisin' you can," says she, "and when the papers have everyone talkin' about you, them vodeville managers will pay you a fortune, to wiggle your feet or show off your shape."

MRS. GILMORE.

It's a wonderful gift, Mr. Murphy, to look

lightly upon troubles and cares and worries. It's a gift few enjoy. I wish it were given to me.

MURPHY.

What's the sense of worrying over your troubles, when your neighbors will do it for you?

MRS. GILMORE.

That's just it, Mr. Murphy. I have two daughters. I want everyone to respect those girls, because they are my own flesh and blood.

MURPHY.

Sure, now, I wouldn't feel as badly as that. We'll make a monkey out of Worthing when the case comes to trial.

MRS. GILMORE.

You don't mean they will take my husband into court! They can't, they won't do that!

(Murphy does not speak, realizing he has made a mistake.)

Please tell me.

MURPHY.

I was just thinking of something funny that happened at the house the other day. My wife and I———.

MRS. GILMORE.

(Interrupts.)

They won't carry these accusations into the courts, will they, Mr. Murphy?

MURPHY.

Faith, now, they may. But you needn't worry, 'cause your husband came by every dollar honestly.

MRS. GILMORE.

I didn't dream it was as serious as that. I can't bear it, I can't bear it!

(Sinks in chair and begins to cry.)

MURPHY.

(With great feeling.)

Faith, I wished I knew what to say to you, but when you cry, I think of my wife and kiddy at home, and I get kind of soft myself.

(Shows emotion and effort to keep tears back.)

(A short pause.)

MRS. GILMORE.

(Looks up and dries her eyes.)

(Then between sobs.)

They're cruel, cruel, heartless! Think how they will disgrace my girls!

MURPHY.

(With feeling.)

I'm sorry, mam.

(Bus of reflection.)

JANE.

(Enters center.)

Mr. Worthing to see Mr. Gilmore.

MRS. GILMORE.

(Excitedly.)

Show him in.

(Rises from chair.)

(Jane exits center.)

(To Murphy.)

You'd better wait in the other room for Mr. Gilmore.

(Indicates door right.)

MURPHY.

Faith, now, you wouldn't want Worthing to think I was runnin' away from him?

(Mrs. Gilmore does not answer.)

(Murphy regards Mrs. Gilmore, then slowly crosses to center exit.)

I may come back later.

JANE.

(Enters center with Worthing.)

Mr. Worthing.

(Jane exits center.)

(Worthing is forty-five years of age and appears rather serious.)

(Mrs. Gilmore stands down stage looking front.)

(Murphy is near center exit.)

MURPHY.

(Regards Worthing. To him.)

I'm not saying what I think of you, but I'm thinking.

(Exits center.)

WORTHING.

(Stands up stage. Regards Mrs. Gilmore, who still stands down stage looking front. Worthing slowly crosses down stage.)

Good evening, Mrs. Gilmore.

MRS. GILMORE.

(Turns, regards him.)

Frank and I have always shared each other's secrets. You know that. Tell me it's all a mistake.

(Worthing does not answer.)

Tell me you have not been investigating.

(Worthing does not answer.)

Then it's true! Oh, I see it in your face! It's true!

(Worthing looks away.)

(A pause.)

(Gilmore enters center.)

(*Mrs. Gilmore rushes to husband and puts her arms about him.*)

Have you read the horrible story?

GILMORE.

Don't you worry. There's nothing to it.

MRS. GILMORE.

Mr. Worthing has been investigating, dear.

GILMORE.

(Regards Worthing. His attitude is calculating, but not unfriendly.)

(Mrs. Gilmore regards both men.)

WORTHING.

(Crosses to Gilmore.)

Hello, Frank.

(Takes his hand.)

We've been good old friends, and I'm sorry.

GILMORE.

I appreciate your sentiment, Elbert, and feel you're doing what you consider your duty.

WORTHING.

I'm glad you understand.

MRS. GILMORE.

But you're innocent of these terrible charges, dear?

GILMORE.

(Looks at wife.)

Of course.

MRS. GILMORE.

(To Worthing.)

You see he's innocent, Mr. Worthing.—You investigated because it was your duty as State's Attorney to do so, but now that you know Frank is innocent, you'll withdraw the charges.

(Worthing does not answer.)

Why don't you speak, why don't you say something? Oh, you don't think my husband guilty?

(Worthing does not answer.)

Tell me you believe in Frank.

WORTHING.

(Bus of reflection, then looks down and away.)

I wish to God I could.

MRS. GILMORE.

(To Worthing.)

You're merely jesting—playing some trick.—Oh, how can you make such accusations!

GILMORE.

(To wife.)

Money can do anything, nowadays, dear.

WORTHING.

What do you mean?

(Mrs. Gilmore watches intently.)

GILMORE.

The Western is a rich concern. That's why they think they can ruin me.

WORTHING.

What could be their object in doing that?

GILMORE.

To get me out of the way. I might expose their crooked methods in politics and in the courts. Do you know they've set judges on the bench? Do you think those judges build fine homes and ride in autos on the salary they get in office?

WORTHING.

Why don't you expose such corruption?

GILMORE.

President Monroe and his crowd cover their tracks petty well. Suppose I brought them into court. They'd hire the best legal talent in the country, work every crooked method known to law and the taxpayers would foot the bill.

WORTHING.

Why did the Western bring Murphy and Simms into this, if you're the man they're after?

GILMORE.

I'm not answering for Simms or Murphy.

MRS. GILMORE.

(To Worthing.)

You see. It's all trickery.

WORTHING.

(Crosses to center exit.)

(To Gilmore.)

I'll meet you to-morrow.

GILMORE.

(Crosses to him.)

Let's talk this matter over now. Sit down.

(Indicates chair.)

WORTHING.

I prefer to see you at my office.

(Regards Mrs. Gilmore.)

GILMORE.

(Looks at wife.)

(To wife.)

Dear, you'd better go.

MRS. GILMORE.

(Regards husband.)

Look at me. Tell me you are innocent.

GILMORE.

(Looks at wife.)

(A slight pause.)

Do you mistrust me?

MRS. GILMORE.

No, no! I love you too much for that! I believe in you, but I want to hear you say once more you are innocent.

(She looks into his eyes; he in hers.)

GILMORE.

Of course, I am innocent.

MRS. GILMORE.

Then I will remain.

GILMORE.

You're right, dear.

(To Worthing.)

The charges against me are absolutely without foundation.

WORTHING.

When the owners of the Western told me of their suspicions, I thought it was a frameup, as you claim, and took the case out of friendship for you and your wife; to make sure you got a square deal.

GILMORE.

Well?

(Worthing hesitates, then regards Mrs. Gilmore.

I want my wife to hear everything you have to say.

WORTHING.

I have gone over the ground thoroughly and am convinced of your guilt.

GILMORE.

(His attitude changes from calculating friendliness to anger.)

Then why did you come here to-night?

WORTHING.

To help you avoid the disgrace which will follow the trial.

MRS. GILMORE.

The disgrace!

GILMORE.

What do you mean, Worthing?

WORTHING.

(Pause.)

I came to offer you a chance to escape punishment.

(Mrs. Gilmore is all eagerness.)

GILMORE.

(Coolly.)

And that?

WORTHING.

Turn state's evidence.

MRS. GILMORE.

State's evidence!

GILMORE.

(To Worthing.)

(Calmly.)

I'm innocent until proven guilty, Worthing.

MRS. GILMORE.

They can't prove you guilty, dear! They can't prove you guilty!

GILMORE.

(To wife.)

Of course not.

(Then half to wife and half to Worthing.)

You know nowdays when a State's Attorney feels he's up against it in some case he's prosecuting, he goes to one or more of those on trial, browbeats them into believing they will land behind the bars, and then when he has pictured the horrors of the pen, and the disgrace and everything, he makes them believe their only chance of escaping lies in taking The Immunity Bath. In that way the State's Attorney induces the victim to turn State's Evidence, and thus assures the success of his case.

(Mrs. Gilmore seats herself.)

WORTHING.

(Somewhat vexed.)

You're putting up a strong bluff, Gilmore. I insist you do the one and only thing that will prevent complete disgrace for your wife and family; the only thing that will prevent unhappiness between your daughter and my son.

GILMORE.

Your son?

WORTHING.

You will make your daughter undesirable for Will, if you go to the penitentiary.

MRS. GILMORE.

The penitentiary!

GILMORE.

(To wife.)

You see the influences he's trying to exert to compel me to lie myself into disgrace?

(To Worthing.)

I wouldn't betray my friends in spite of any-

thing you might say; in spite of anything you might do.

WORTHING.

You call Murphy and Simms your friends. Why, either one of them would eagerly accept the same chance I have offered you.

GILMORE.

Then why did you come to me? Did you think me the easiest prey to your dastardly offer?—What right have you to offer Immunity?

WORTHING.

The right comes with the office which comes from the people.

GILMORE.

The people, through their representatives, set forth certain acts as crimes, and certain punishments for those crimes. You take it upon yourself to do away with the punishment. You're defeating the will of the people.

WORTHING.

I didn't come to argue my right, Gilmore. I came to protect your wife's good name.

GILMORE.

You, you protect her good name. You're a disgrace to the office you hold. You think you're doing a smart thing when you induce a lot of poor, weak devils, to take The Immunity Bath. You make them believe they're protecting their family's good name, when in reality they're only dragging it further in the mire by making welchers and cringing cowards of themselves. I don't blame them, I blame you. I'm made of different stuff, Worthing. If I were as guilty as hell and standing within the shadow of the penitentiary, I wouldn't accept your damnable offer.

WORTHING.

Think of your wife, think of your daughters, think what a term in the penitentiary would mean to them.

(Mrs. Gilmore sighs aloud, but does not speak.)

GILMORE.

You haven't a case to stand on, Worthing. It will be thrown out of court and the State's Attorney's office will be the laughing stock of the country.

WORTHING.

During the past year you have invested a hundred thousand dollars in real estate in this city.

GILMORE.

That's my business.

WORTHING.

It may be the court's business. You may be called upon to account where you secured so much money in one year on a ten thousand dollar salary.

MRS. GILMORE.

Frank, have you invested so much money?

GILMORE.

Why, no.

(To Worthing.)

Suppose I had invested as much as you say. That wouldn't prove anything.

WORTHING.

Standing alone, no. But suppose I could prove that Blake of the Newell gave you a check for fifty thousand dollars?

GILMORE.

(Worried.)

That would be circumstantial evidence.

WORTHING.

In view of the fact that The Newell Company, a brand new concern, was favored with all of the Western's repair business, I would consider the check conclusive proof.

GILMORE.

There wasn't any check, so you couldn't produce one.

WORTHING.

A copy would serve equally well.

GILMORE.

(More worried.)

(Excitedly.)

Why, what do you mean?

WORTHING.

I mean Simms is waiting at his home to receive the same chance I have offered you.

GILMORE.

(Excitedly.)

You're bluffing—you're———.

WORTHING.

(Interrupts.)

In return for a set of plates of the checks you all received.

GILMORE.

(Action showing realization.)

(Mrs. Gilmore watches husband intently, but does not speak.)

(Gilmore thinks a moment, then crosses hurriedly to the telephone and takes off receiver. He watches Worthing as he crosses.)

(At 'phone.)

Hello—Main 221—Hello. Is Mr. Simms there? ——Hello. Simms?—This is Worthing, the State's Attorney, talking. I accept your offer. I'll give you Immunity. Have you those plates ready?—You have! You'll—bring—them—right—up!

(Gilmore puts up receiver limply. He is greatly affected. He sits head lowered. Mrs. Gilmore borders on collapse. Worthing looks on greatly affected. Gilmore finally, after a short pause, looks up and gazes at Worthing as though he had just learned of his presence in the room. Gilmore speaks in a low, broken voice.)

You'd better hurry back to the office, Worthing. Simms is on his way there and you might miss him.

WORTHING.

(Moves slowly up stage, looking down. He stops and speaks with kindly feeling.)

Now will you accept my offer?

GILMORE.

Bring on your welchers, your Immunity seekers. Line them up from one end of the court room to the other. The more you have, the harder I'll fight.

WORTHING.

Then you refuse?

GILMORE.

Refuse? Of course I refuse. I've got too much confidence in a jury of American people to fear the Western's game. To hell with your Immunity Bath.

(Worthing moves to exit center, head lowered; Mrs. Gilmore collapses in chair right and Gilmore rushes to his wife's side.)

AS
THE
CURTAIN
FALLS.

ACT III.

Library in the Gilmore home. A few minutes later.

(When the curtain rises, Mrs. Gilmore is discovered seated in chair right. She is in a very nervous condition. She holds a wet cloth to her head. Jane stands near her, having just attended her. Mrs. Gilmore lowers cloth and with handkerchief dries her eyes.)

(Mr. Gilmore paces nervously back and forth across the room, up stage, now and then regarding his wife, and then looking sorrowfully away.)

(A pause.)

JANE.

Will you need me any more, mam?

MRS. GILMORE.

No, Jane.

JANE.

(Crosses to exit, center, stops, hesitates, then recrosses to Mrs. Gilmore.)

I was wondering if you'd mind if I went to a sociable.

MRS. GILMORE.

You may go, Jane.

JANE.

(Hesitates, thinks.)

If there's anything I can do———.

MRS. GILMORE.

Go to your sociable, Jane, and have a good time.

JANE.

(Regards Mrs. Gilmore a moment, then hesitates before speaking.)

(Gladly.)

Thank you, mam.

(Regards Mrs. Gilmore again. Changes expression from gladness to feeling.)

(With feeling.)

I'm sorry.

(Regards Mrs. Gilmore as she slowly crosses to center exit. When she nears Gilmore, she stands hesitating, acting as though she would speak to him. He is looking away.)

(The door bell rings.)

GILMORE.

(To Jane, without turning.)

See who that is, Jane.

JANE.

Yes, sir.

(Exits center.)

(Gilmore paces across the room. He casts one sorrowful glance at his wife, then looks away.)

(Jane re-enters center.)

(To Gilmore.)

Mr. Murphy, sir.

GILMORE.

I'll see him in the morning.

(Jane crosses to center exit.)

And Jane.

JANE.

(Stops, turns.)

Yes, sir.

GILMORE.

Tell Murphy that Simms has———. Just say I'll see him in the morning.

(Jane exits center.)

(Mrs. Gilmore cries anew when husband reads line about Simms.)

(Gilmore stops pacing, looks up and slowly crosses to his wife. He stands before her.)

It's hard, dear; but we must be brave.

MRS. GILMORE.

Oh, what shall we do?

GILMORE.

We'll fight, dear.

MRS. GILMORE.

Against such odds? You are convicted before the trial!

GILMORE.

It's a hard fight. But I'll win.

MRS. GILMORE.

I wish I could believe it! I wish I could believe it!

GILMORE.

You'll see when the trial is over.

MRS. GILMORE.

Even that will mean disgrace!

GILMORE.

Wait, wait.

MRS. GILMORE.

I'm afraid I'll only be awaiting your doom. Why, when you 'phoned Simms, I, who love you so very much and trust you implicitly, could scarcely believe in your innocence.

GILMORE.

Don't say that! I wouldn't fight against such odds if it wasn't for you. I wouldn't have the courage.

MRS. GILMORE.

I want to be so brave; but I'm afraid it's too much to expect in the face of the evidence.

GILMORE.

Worthing hasn't any evidence.

MRS. GILMORE.

Then why does he accuse you?

GILMORE.

He's helping the Western ruin me.

MRS. GILMORE.

Why should he do that?

GILMORE.

To make himself strong with the people.—Don't you see what effect it will have on the public mind when he prosecutes me, who is known as his friend? He will lead the people to believe his duty to them is his first and only consideration. He may be aiming at something bigger, a higher office.

MRS. GILMORE.

He needn't ruin you to accomplish what you say. Why, it's absurd.

GILMORE.

That's what he's doing, I tell you.

MRS. GILMORE.

No, no! In spite of the evidence, he offered you a chance to escape.

GILMORE.

He wanted me to play right into his hands and assure the success of the Western's lies.

MRS. GILMORE.

I wish I could believe what you say!

GILMORE.

(Worried.)

You mean———.

MRS. GILMORE.

(Somewhat calmly and deliberately.)

I have believed in you throughout; defended you; asked few questions, few explanations———.

GILMORE.

(Interrupts.)

(Somewhat excitedly.)

I know, dear. You've been too kind, with everything against me.

MRS. GILMORE.

—but when you accuse a lifelong friend———.

GILMORE.

(Interrupts.)

(Very excitedly.)

I didn't mean what I said about Worthing! It's the worry, the trouble, the excitement, the thought of you and Marie and Florence that made me accuse him as I did! But I didn't mean it, so help me God I didn't!

MRS. GILMORE.

(Very calmly and deliberately.)

I want you to tell me why you lost your position.

GILMORE.

I've told you that; explained it all!

MRS. GILMORE.

Why did you lose your position?

GILMORE.

The Western sought revenge because I supported an enemy of the road.

MRS. GILMORE.

Then why were the papers told you resigned?

GILMORE.

I don't know why they were told that! I don't ———! Yes! It just came to me! The Western knew if they said I resigned without giving any reason, it would look peculiar, cause insinuations, as it has done the past week! I see the trick now! It's clear to me, all clear!

(Appealingly.)

You see it yourself, don't you, dear?

(Mrs. Gilmore does not answer, although Gilmore awaits her to do so.)

You don't mistrust me? You don't think me guilty? It isn't fair! It isn't right! Worthing has been taken in.

MRS. GILMORE.

Have you invested any money in real estate the past year?

GILMORE.

Yes. Some.

MRS. GILMORE.

How much?

GILMORE.

Not a great deal. I haven't counted it up. I've made a little money lately. Struck it lucky in stocks. I may have invested more than I think.

MRS. GILMORE.

As much as Worthing claims?

GILMORE.

Perhaps. Yes. But I made it in stocks.

MRS. GILMORE.

What stocks?

GILMORE.

I don't know. I mean, I don't remember. There were several, several stocks. You're confusing me. Please don't question me. I need your love, your faith.

MRS. GILMORE.

You made a hundred thousand dollars in stocks and didn't tell me a word about it?

GILMORE.

I see your argument. It does look peculiar. I should have told you. But I knew you'd forbid me to speculate. I'd have to explain the details and you wouldn't understand.

MRS. GILMORE.

Why didn't you tell me about the money after you had made it?

GILMORE.

I intended to invest again. But I meant to tell you when I was through speculating.

MRS. GILMORE.

Didn't you receive a check from the Newell Repair Company?

GILMORE.

No, not a single penny.

MRS. GILMORE.

How do you explain those plates?

GILMORE.

Simms hasn't any plates, because there wasn't any check.

MRS. GILMORE.

Simms told you he had when you 'phoned him.

GILMORE.

Yes, yes, he did. That's part of the frameup. That's———.

(Stops abruptly.)

(Gilmore gains some control of himself, becoming provoked when he suddenly realizes his wife has been exciting him.)

(Spoken firmly.)

I'm going to tell you the truth about this whole affair. I did receive that check, but for what I thought was my share of a stock investment. I believed that until Murphy told me otherwise and when I asked Blake to explain, he intimated I understood the check was my share of the graft. Then it dawned upon me for the first time why Blake always refused to tell me what stock we were investing in.—I should have told you from the start, but I didn't think you would believe me. You've got to believe me now; you've got to believe every word I've told you is the truth.

MRS. GILMORE.

For the children's sake, I do want to believe.

GILMORE.

That's why I'm fighting. For the children's sake, for your sake.

MRS. GILMORE.

They can't convict you if you are innocent.

GILMORE.

They can't convict me in spite of———. If they do, you won't forsake me. You'll still believe in me. You'll wait until———. Oh, God, they can't convict me!

(He holds his hands over his eyes and staggers slightly.)

MARIE.

(Enters door right.)

Mamsy, you promised to call me when daddy came.

(Mrs. Gilmore stands right, looking front, and does not answer.)

(Gilmore, who was beside his wife, crosses left, and looks away.)

Hello, daddy.

(Crosses to her father. Notices his attitude.)

(Gilmore does not answer.)

Why, daddy! Have you and mamsy been fightin'?

(Neither husband nor wife answer. Both still look away.)

You're not a bit glad to see me, daddy, and I've missed you awful much.

GILMORE.

(Forced to speak, but does not look at child.)

Yes, dear. I'm glad to see you.

MARIE.

(Stands beside father.)

You don't act like you were, daddy.

GILMORE.

(Turns and with effort looks at child.)

How are you, dear?

MARIE.

Why don't you kiss me, daddy?

(Gilmore leans over to kiss child.)

Oh, no, daddy. Kiss me like you always do.

(Gilmore raises Marie off her feet and kisses her. He puts her down.)

That's better, daddy.—You look awful cross.

GILMORE.

I'm tired, dear; tired after a long ride.

MARIE.

Then you'll be all right again in the morning, won't you daddy?

GILMORE.

Yes, dear; after a good rest.

MARIE.

And you won't go away any more, will you, daddy?

GILMORE.

Why, no. Unless—some business———.

(Mrs. Gilmore. Anguish.)

MARIE.

I don't want you to go away, daddy, 'cause it's awful lonesome when you're not here.

MRS. GILMORE.

(Who has all the while been looking front and reflecting child's lines, speaks.)

It's late, dear. You ought to be in bed.

MARIE.

Can't I stay with daddy a little while, mamsy?

GILMORE.

I'll see you in the morning, dear.

MARIE.

All right. Good-night, daddy.

GILMORE.

Good-night, Marie.

(Raises child off feet and kisses her.)

MARIE.

(Crosses to her mother.)

Good-night, mamsy.

MRS. GILMORE.

Good-night, dear.

(Bends over and kisses child.)

MARIE.

Oh, daddy. I met Mr. Murphy and I think he's an awful nice man.

(Gilmore reflects line.)

(Marie crosses to exit right, then turns.)

You're real sure you won't go away any more, daddy?

GILMORE.

I won't go away, dear.

MARIE.

Don't you forget.

(She crosses to exit right, smiling innocently at her father and waving her hand at him until she reaches exit.)

Good-night, daddy.

(Smiles upon father and exits right.)

GILMORE.

(Has tried hard to smile back at child, but it was a sad effort. He watches Marie intently until she is gone, when he puts his hand over his eyes as though to shut out the vision of the little girl. He is fighting hard to pull himself together. He staggers toward his wife, right.)

I'm afraid.

MRS. GILMORE.

Afraid?

GILMORE.

(Still fights hard to control himself.)

Afraid of the future, afraid of the trial. I fear———.

MRS. GILMORE.

You fear———?

GILMORE.

(Completely breaks down. Speaks slowly and in a voice full of anguish.)

They've got the goods on me. They're going to send me over.

MRS. GILMORE.

You don't know what you are saying!

GILMORE.

It's true. I am the thief they claim I am.

MRS. GILMORE.

No! No!

GILMORE.

Please, please forgive me.

(Moves to wife as though to put his hands on her. She moves away from him quickly and crosses left.)

(Pause.)

I'm ashamed, ashamed!

MRS. GILMORE.

You've deceived me! Broken my faith in you! I wish I had never met you, never known you!

(Sinks in chair left of table center.)

GILMORE.

Don't say that! I need you to help me save our

good name! You'll stand by me and help me fight!

MRS. GILMORE.

You haven't a chance to fight it out and win! You are going to the penitentiary! To the———. No, no! For the children's sake, I won't let you go!

GILMORE.

I'm glad you'll help me! I'm glad you'll———!

MRS. GILMORE.

(Interrupts.)

You must accept Worthing's offer.

GILMORE.

No! No!

MRS. GILMORE.

It will keep you with us, instead of there, where you'll further disgrace us!

GILMORE.

It will be worse if I do as you say! Think what a coward, what a cur I will be making of myself!

MRS. GILMORE.

You owe it to all of us to avoid becoming a—— a convict!

GILMORE.

I'll fight, that's how I'll avoid it! I'll beat them, that's what I'll do! I'll beat them, I tell you! I'll beat them!

MRS. GILMORE.

You must accept Worthing's offer.

(Reaches for 'phone.)

GILMORE.

Let me be a man, the kind of man you love! The Immunity Bath won't cleanse me!

(Mrs. Gilmore takes up receiver.)

Don't call Worthing! Please, don't call him!

MRS. GILMORE.

(At 'phone.)

Hello.—Central, 184.

GILMORE.

No, no! Please!

(Pause.)

MRS. GILMORE.

(At 'phone.)

Hello.—Just a moment.

(Looks at husband.)

(Offers 'phone.)

Mr. Worthing.

GILMORE.

He hasn't the right to make the offer! He's doing away with the punishment, defeating the will of the people!

MRS. GILMORE.

It means me; it means the children.

GILMORE.

Don't put it that way! There's no one wants to speak to Worthing! No one wants to speak to him!

(Regards wife, who still offers 'phone, then slowly staggers to the telephone. He is fighting hard to stand by his ideal. He speaks as he crosses.)

You, you, my wife, make me turn welcher, cur, coward, because I can't bear to lose you!

(Has reached 'phone and takes receiver his wife offers and picks up 'phone. He stands back of center table facing the audience. He acts as though to speak into 'phone, regards his wife, makes another attempt as though to speak in 'phone, regards wife again, fights hard and desperately; gradually is seen to gain ground in his struggle, for he slowly straightens from his shrinking position and suddenly puts up the receiver with a bang. His dogged character has returned.)

(Firmly.)

(Spoken to wife as he puts up receiver.)

I won't do it.

MRS. GILMORE.

Oh, oh!

(Buries face in arms, leaning over center table.)

(Pause.)

GILMORE.

(With great feeling.)

I want you to know it isn't because I don't love you that I have refused to do as you ask, for no one in this whole world will ever fill the place you will leave vacant. If you only understood how vile and groveling a creature a welcher really is, you would

realize I must love you very, very much, to sacrifice you rather than stoop so low. A ghoul is the lowliest bird that lives, because it feeds on dead carcasses. A welcher is even lower than that. He is like the dead carcass the ghoul feeds upon, for when mishap befalls him in his scheme of things, he offers as much resistance to the tearing off of his cloak of respectability, as the dead carcass to the tearing off of its flesh.

MRS. GILMORE.

I have nothing more to say.

(She looks sorrowfully front, and Gilmore stands regarding her, a painful expression on his face.)

AS
THE
CURTAIN
FALLS.

ACT IV.

Library in the Gilmore Home.

A few days later.

Evening.

(The curtain rises upon an empty stage. A slight pause when the door bell rings. After a moment Jane enters door center with William Worthing.)

JANE.

(To William as they enter.)

Mr. Gilmore left word he'd be back very soon.

WILLIAM.

Very well, Jane.

JANE.

(Turns, hesitates, then turns to William.)

Shall I call Miss Florence?

(William: Expression of sadness.)

(Jane looks peculiarly and somewhat sadly at William, then starts to exit center.)

WILLIAM.

Jane.

JANE.

(Turns.)

Yes, sir.

WILLIAM.

Has Herne been here?

JANE.

You mean the electrician?

WILLIAM.

(Pause. Thoughtful.)

(Realization.)

Why—yes.

JANE.

He's fixing the lights in the room off the hall.—Shall I call him?

WILLIAM.

I'll wait for Mr. Gilmore.

JANE.

Yes, sir.

(Exits center.)

(William moves down stage to center table, looks up at chandelier at lights, then sits in chair left of table, picks up paper and begins to read.)

FLORENCE.

(Enters right and crosses center.)

(William notices Florence as she crosses. He rises from chair and puts paper down.)

(Florence looks up with a start as she nears and sees William.)

Oh!

(Moves back hesitatingly.)

WILLIAM.

(Looks down, then up at Florence and speaks in an embarrassed manner.)

How do you do?

FLORENCE.

(Shyly.)

I've intruded.

WILLIAM.

Yes———.

(Startled and embarrassed.)

No, no. Not at all. I'm glad to see you.

(Crosses toward her and stops near her.)

It seems some time since you—since—since we've seen each other.

FLORENCE.

(Shyly.)

Yes.

(Pause, during which both regard each other. They look down and act embarrassed.)

You've been quite well?

WILLIAM.

Yes. And you?

FLORENCE.

(Looks down. Hesitates.)

(Sadly.)

You shouldn't have come, Will.

(Shows feeling.)

(William does not answer and looks away.)

Perhaps—perhaps you didn't come to see me.

WILLIAM.

No. That is—not exactly.

FLORENCE.

I'd better go.

(Starts to cross to exit right.)

WILLIAM.

You don't understand.

FLORENCE.

(Stops.)

(Pause.)

Well?

WILLIAM.

I came to see your father.

FLORENCE.

(Quickly.)

Your father has agreed to drop the charges?

WILLIAM.

No. Father would gladly have done that long ago, had Monroe of the Western consented.

FLORENCE.

Then what chance is there?

WILLIAM.

I have an appointment with President Monroe to-night.

FLORENCE.

You intend to plead with him? That's useless. Besides father will not permit it.

(Looks down and away.)

(William starts to cross to Florence.)

GILMORE.

(Enters center.)

Hello, Will.

(Interrupts William's cross.)

WILLIAM.

How do you do, Mr. Gilmore?

(Florence moves a few steps right and exits.)

GILMORE.

(To William.)

Kept you waiting?

WILLIAM.

Not very long.

GILMORE.

(Nervously.)

You 'phoned Monroe?

WILLIAM.

Yes.

GILMORE.

(Nervously.)

With what result? What did he say?

WILLIAM.

At first he absolutely refused to come.

GILMORE.

Yes. And then?

WILLIAM.

Something caused him to change his attitude completely. And he agreed.

GILMORE.

(Nervously.)

You're sure he isn't bluffing?

WILLIAM.

I think not.

GILMORE.

When do you expect him?

WILLIAM.

Any time now. At eight he said.

(Consults watch.)

It's almost that.

JANE.

(Enters center and announces.)

Mr. Monroe and Mr. Carroll.

GILMORE.

Show them in.

(Jane exits center.)

WILLIAM.

I'll ring the hall bell when I want you. Hurry.

(Gilmore, who has crossed to exit right, hurriedly exits.)

(William crosses to table center and stands there a moment looking at books on table.)

JANE.

(Enters center with Monroe and Carroll.)

Mr. Monroe and Mr. Carroll.

(Jane exits center.)

WILLIAM.

(Turns. Crosses to Carroll.)

How do you do, Mr. Carroll?

(Offers hand.)

CARROLL.

(Accepts hand William offers.)

Hello, Will.

(Turns to Monroe.)

(Speaks to William.)

This is President Monroe.

(To Monroe.)

The State's Attorney's son.

MONROE.

(Coldly.)

Oh, yes.

WILLIAM.

(Crosses to Monroe.)

Glad to make your acquaintance, President Monroe.

(Offers hand.)

MONROE.

(Regards William coldly and then, after a short hesitation, takes William's extended hand.)

(Coldly.)

How do you do?

WILLIAM.

(To Monroe.)

Won't you sit down?

(Indicates chair right of table.)

MONROE.

(Crosses and seats himself right of table.)

Thanks.

WILLIAM.

(To Carroll.)

Sit down, Carroll.

(Indicates chair left of table.)

(Carroll sits down.)

(William crosses and draws up chair at back of table.)

MONROE.

Where's Gilmore?

WILLIAM.

We will proceed without him for a few moments.

CARROLL.

You're representing him, Will?

WILLIAM.

Yes.

MONROE.

Well?

WILLIAM.

I understand you insist upon pushing these charges.

MONROE.

I have insisted from the very start.

WILLIAM.

And you intend to push the case through to the end.

MONROE.

That's up to the owners of the Western.

WILLIAM.

They are willing to settle out of court, on a cash basis.

CARROLL.

How do you know that, Will?

WILLIAM.

From a reliable source.

MONROE.

Perhaps you're right.

WILLIAM.

I want to induce you to change your mind.—Gilmore isn't a bad sort.

MONROE.

As a railroad man, he's one of the best; but dabbling in other people's money is out of his line, and it isn't my fault he's finding it out.

WILLIAM.

Do you realize what unhappiness will be caused

to a wife and two innocent girls because of your attitude?

MONROE.

I'm not to blame for that.

WILLIAM.

You could avoid it.

MONROE.

Theft is theft, and if sympathy for wife and family is omitted from cases like this, we will be in a way of enforcing law and order, and thus bring about a higher standard of citizenship.

WILLIAM.

I don't doubt but what the application of that principle in all cases would result in what you say, a higher citizenship. But citizenship affects the nation at large. This case affects the home. If Gilmore and the rest did wrong, what does the wrong really amount to, when you figure it all out. A few thousand dollars were taken, and from a corporation.

MONROE.

Such socialistic twaddle is undermining our nation, young man, and the sooner you discard such ideas, that it isn't really wrong to steal from a cor-

poration, the sooner you will be in a way of elevating yourself in the minds of thinking people.

WILLIAM.

You misunderstand me, Mr. Monroe. What I mean is that no one was injured by Gilmore's action.

MONROE.

The community at large suffered a gross and irreparable injury in having held up to esteem and respect a man who broke that community's faith in him.

CARROLL.

It is useless to argue with President Monroe, Will. I know you cannot change his mind.

MONROE.

That is quite impossible, I assure you.

WILLIAM.

Then you absolutely refuse to drop the case?

MONROE.

Absolutely. If you have nothing further to advance in the matter, you have wasted my valuable time.

(Rises.)

(To Carroll.)

Come, Carroll. We'll be going.

WILLIAM.

Just a moment. I have something further to say.

(Monroe regards William and again seats himself.

MONROE.

What is it, young man?

WILLIAM.

(To Monroe.)

I have been investigating a fraud case, Mr. Monroe.

MONROE.

(Calmly.)

Yes.

WILLIAM.

The other day, in the course of my work, my investigation took me to the Newell Repair Company.

MONROE.

(Interested.)

Yes.

WILLIAM.

I learned that Blake, the supposed owner of the Newell concern, is only a figurehead.

MONROE.

(Slightly worried.)

What are you driving at?

WILLIAM.

That Gilmore and Murphy and Simms have been the pikers, the small grafters in this repair shop scheme.

MONROE.

(More worried.)

I don't understand.

WILLIAM.

I mean that a man higher up has used these three men as the means whereby he got thousands where they got only dollars.

(Stops abruptly.)

Oh. I quite forgot about Gilmore. I'll call him.

(Exits abruptly and hurriedly, right.)

MONROE.

(Looks after William excitedly, then when William is out of the room, he turns to Carroll.)

(Excitedly.)

They're on to me.

CARROLL.

Don't get excited. Young Worthing is bluffing.

MONROE.

He can't be. He knows that Blake is a figurehead. He mentioned a man higher up. I'd better agree to drop the case.

CARROLL.

No. Don't do that. Don't lose your nerve. The fact that you've insisted the case be tried has put everybody off the track. That has been your best move.

MONROE.

(With great agitation.)

But suppose they prove in open court that I am the owner of the Newell Company. I couldn't cover it up then, and they'd land me with the rest. Think of it, they'd put me behind the bars and I'd be disgraced, ruined!

CARROLL.

If young Worthing knew that you are the real owner of the Newell Company, do you suppose he would have wasted time pleading for Gilmore? He's guessing, I tell you. Stick to your original plan. See that the case goes through.

MONROE.

Perhaps you're right.

CARROLL.

Calm yourself. Some one's coming.

(Pause.)

WILLIAM.

(Enters center.)

Mr. Gilmore will be here in a moment.

CARROLL.

You spoke of a man higher up, Will. Who is he?

MONROE.

(Has recovered his composure, somewhat.)

Yes. Who is he?

WILLIAM.

The same man who speaks of law and order and citizenship; of injury to the community because of breach of faith.

MONROE.

Why, what do you mean?

WILLIAM.

I mean that you, Monroe, you, who preach high ideals and lofty principles, are the real owner of the Newell concern and have stolen thousands upon thousands from the railroad of which you are the esteemed and respected president. And you, the instigator, the principal profit maker of the repair shop graft, would, in order to cover up your own tracks, wreck the happiness of the wives and children of the men who have been your tools.

MONROE.

(Very excitedly.)

Every word you're saying is a lie!

CARROLL.

On behalf of President Monroe, I demand you withdraw such false accusations.

WILLIAM.

(Crosses to center exit and calls.)

Herne.

(Rings hall bell.)

(To Monroe.)

This afternoon I was reasonably sure that my claim is true. I 'phoned you. You consented to come, which convinced me I was right. You wanted to find out what I knew. I'm glad you came, because you have placed me in a position where I can prove everything by your own words.

(Herne and Stone enter center.)

(To Carroll and Monroe.)

This is Mr. Herne. And this is Mr. Stone. Both are Pinkerton detectives.

(Monroe is startled.)

(To Herne.)

(Indicates phonograph on table back left.)

Put the record on.

(Worthing enters center.)

(Herne and Stone arrange record on phonograph.)

(Gilmore, Florence and Mrs. Gilmore enter right.)

(Monroe and Carroll look on startled.)

PHONOGRAPH.

They're on to me.—Don't get excited. Young Worthing is bluffing.—He can't be. He knows that Blake is a figurehead. He mentioned a man higher up. I'd better agree to drop the case.—No. Don't do that. Don't lose your nerve. The fact that you've insisted the case be tried has put everybody off the track. That has been your best move. —But suppose they prove in open court that I am the owner of the Newell Company. I couldn't cover it up then, and they'd land me with the rest. Think of it, they'd put me behind the bars and I'd be disgraced, ruined.—If young Worthing knew that you are the real owner of the Newell Company———.

WILLIAM.

(To Herne.)

That will do.

(Herne stops phonograph.)

(Herne and Stone exit center.)

MONROE.

(To Carroll.)

What does this mean?

WILLIAM.

(To Monroe.)

It means you have fallen into the trap I set for you; that when I left this room on a pretext of calling Gilmore, you and Carroll spoke into a dictaphone attached to that chandelier *(Center),* and connected in a room off the hall.

MONROE.

(To Worthing, who stands at center exit.)

I will withdraw the charges.

GILMORE.

(To Monroe.)

No you don't. We're going through with this, into the courts.

MONROE.

(Cringing.)

Do you realize what this means to me—to you?

GILMORE.

You're thinking of yourself, not me. You thought only of yourself when you mounted your pedestal of righteousness and honesty before the owners of the Western by insisting the wrong you claim Murphy and Simms and I committed must be righted. The wrong! The wrong of enriching your pocketbook at the expense of our reputation. That's how you would have had it. You'd have driven us straight through to hell if you could, to accomplish your purpose, but your plan has failed. I'll take my medicine, and, by God, you'll take yours.

MONROE.

(To Mrs. Gilmore.)

Can't you do anything. Can't you persuade him?

(Mrs. Gilmore regards husband, then looks away, but does not speak.)

GILMORE.

(To Monroe.)

(Sadly.)

Good-night, Monroe.

(Monroe and Carroll exit center.)

(Worthing indicates William should go to Florence, then exits center.)

(William crosses to Florence.)

MRS. GILMORE.

(Regards husband, then crosses to him.)

I admire your nerve, your manhood. I love you.

(They are in each others arms and William and Florence regard each other.)

AS
THE
CURTAIN
FALLS.

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